

NRO Awarded the David Packard Excellence in Acquisition Award

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The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) was awarded the David Packard Excellence in Acquisition Award for its GeoLITE satellite demonstration program during ceremonies at the Pentagon Tuesday.

The Packard Award is a Department of Defense honor that recognizes its organizations that have made highly significant contributions which demonstrated exemplary innovation and best acquisition, practices. The NRO's GeoLITE program used corporate best practices to provide a system that was delivered on schedule and under budget. In addition, life cycle costs were reduced by designing a spacecraft that could be operated by a single person and where practical the program took advantage of off the shelf technologies. Another success of the GeoLITE program was the partnership between the Massachusetts Institute of Technology/Lincoln Laboratory, the government funded research laboratory, and TRW, the prime contractor. The two developers worked together to design an interface between the GeoLITE lasercom payload and the satellite bus that provided outstanding on-orbit performance.

The GeoLITE program investigated the use of laser communications technologies to eliminate communications as a constraint to the collection, analysis, processing and dissemination of information critical to national security. The satellite also serves as a theater data dissemination system in the Western Pacific region. The GeoLITE team was made up of various government and industry partners within the NRO.

"The lessons learned from the GeoLITE program are being shared within the NRO and the Department of Defense." said Peter Teets, Undersecretary of the Air Force and NRO Director. "It has forged a path that we hope will be the future of space-based communications."

Teets was presented with the award along with 20 other members of the team, by Edward C. Aldridge, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics.